

February, 23-24 2011

Access to health services by rural Medicare beneficiaries

ISSUE: The Patient Protection and Affordability Act (PPACA) of 2010 requires MedPAC to evaluate access to care, quality of care, and the adequacy of Medicare payments in rural areas. The report is due June 15, 2012. In this meeting we will discuss rural access to care.

KEY POINTS: We analyzed data from 100 percent of Medicare fee-for-service claims files to compare volume of services received by rural and urban beneficiaries. We also analyzed large survey data to assess beneficiaries' satisfaction with their access to care. These two analyses complement the information we presented in November 2010 on in-depth focus groups with beneficiaries in rural areas of three states.

ACTION: Commissioners should discuss the issues raised by this mailing and consider next steps.

STAFF CONTACT: Jeff Stensland (202-220-3726) and Adaeze Akamigbo (202-220-3729)